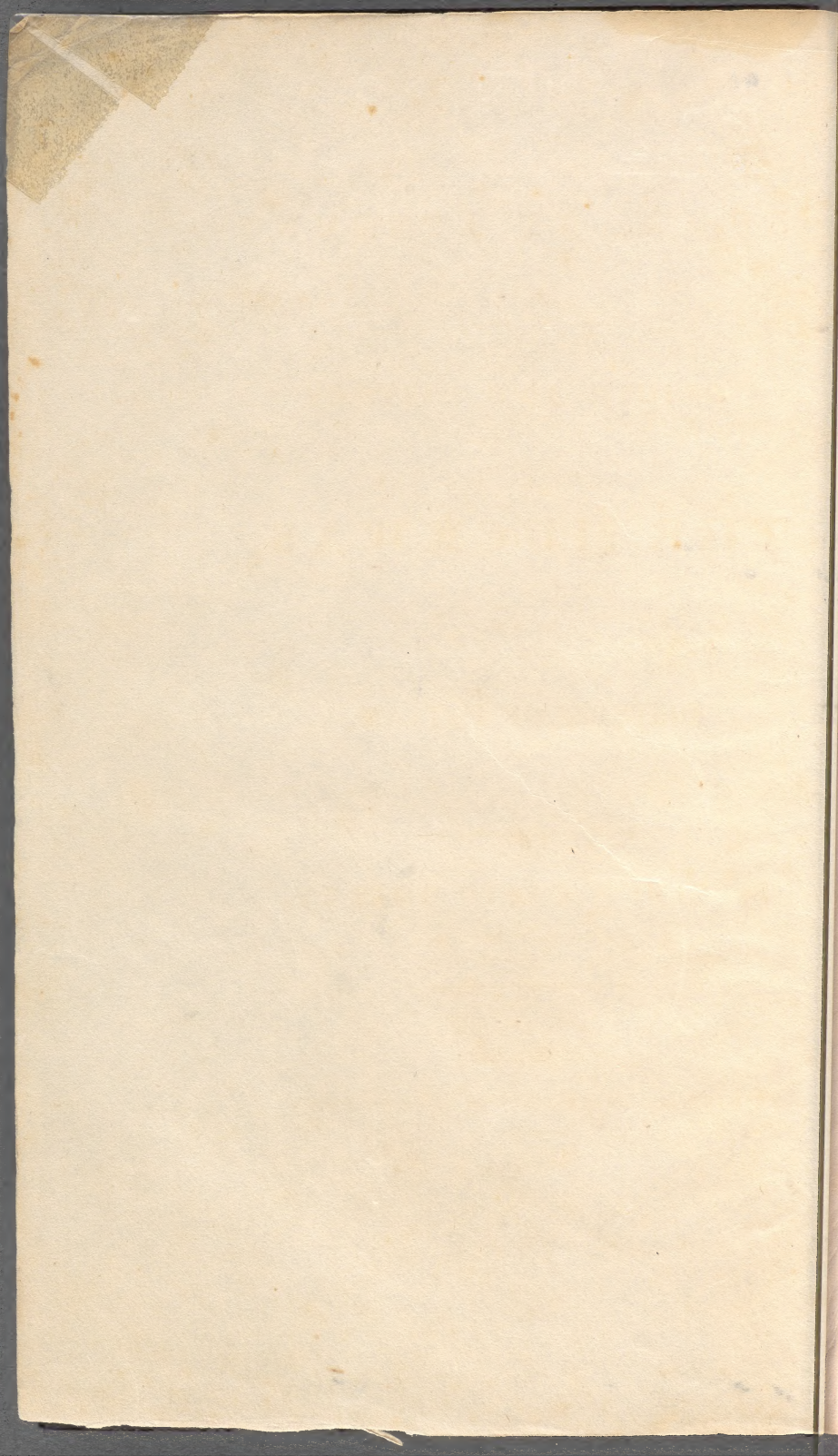


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SUMMARY ACCOUNT

OF THE

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

OF

THE MUCK WAS,

IN THE

DISTRICT OF PUTLAM.

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By SIMON CASIE CHITTY,

MANIAGAR OF PUTLAM.

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COLOMBO:

PRINTED AT THE WESLEYAN MISSION PRESS.

1831.



# THE MARY ACCOUNT

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## SUMMARY ACCOUNT

OF THE

## MUCKWAS.

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Among the various tribes of natives who inhabit the different parts of this district, the *Mukwas*, (or as they call themselves *Mukuger*, from KUGA the ferryman mentioned in the *Rámáyana* as assisting RAMA and his retinue in crossing the *Ganges* on their way from AYODHYA), constitute a very industrious and peaceable body of subjects. These people are partly Mahomedans, and partly Christians, of the roman catholic persuasion, and according to their own account, supported however by no kind of evidence, are originally emigrants from AYODHYA, or some part of OUDE in HINDOSTAN; but they are ignorant of the period when this event occurred. There is a race in *Cutch* or *Kac'hchhava* lying west of GUZERAT, called *Mukwánas*, which from the similarity of the names, may appear to have some relation to the *Mukwas*; but the striking resemblance of the latter, both in their customs and habits, to the *Nairs* and *Mukuas* on the coast of MALABAR, encourages a supposition that they originally emanated from one of these two tribes, and renders the former hypothesis of their origin unnecessary.



When the Coast of MALABAR was overrun by the Mahomedans from ARABIA, the natives were persecuted with the view of causing them to embrace the doctrines of the *Koran*; in order to avoid which the *Mukwas* transported themselves to CEYLON, and established their residence in the *Malabar* provinces. From the information which I have been able to collect it appears, that the place where the *Mukwas* first landed was *Kudremalé*, whence they emigrated to other parts of the Island, and in course of time formed several settlements. Some time after the arrival of the *Mukwas* in the district, their chieftain named VEDI ARASEN, had to contend with a rival called MANIKA TALEIVEN, who then presided over the people denominated *Karreyár*, and possessed a settlement on the southside of the district. MANIKA TALEIVEN dispatched some of his officers to VEDI ARASEN, for the purpose of soliciting his daughter in marriage, but meeting with a refusal, he collected a considerable body of armed men and declared war against the *Mukwas*, avowing their total destruction. As the *Mukwas* were at that time a very weak and defenceless people, they concerted with the crew of an *Arab* vessel, which was then at anchor at *Kudremalé*, and with their assistance slew the rival chieftain and put all his troops to flight. This skirmish is said to have taken place in the plains between *Mangalaveli* and *Kattakádu*, and to support their assertion they point out an ant hill in the vicinity, known by the name of *Mániken Puttoe*, as the place where the remains of the slain chieftain were interred by the victors, after their revenge had been fully satisfied. In return for the service rendered them by the *Arabs*, the whole of the



*Mukwas* embraced the Mahomedan religion; which many of their descendants afterwards renounced in favor of Christianity, through the influence of the *Portuguese*.

After the defeat of the *Karreyás*, the *Múkwas* determined to send an embassy to the court of the Emperor, in order to ingratiate themselves into his favor. They accordingly made choice of certain individuals for the purpose, and dispatched them to *Sitávaka* with many costly presents. When these delegates reached the capital and presented themselves to the Emperor, he received them with uncommon kindness, and granted them several copper *Sannases* or rescripts, whereby the lands in the whole district of *Putlam* and *Calpentyn* were allotted to them for their maintenance as *paravéni*, or as it was subsequently designated *Koppumuri paravéni*, from their breaking off branches of trees and planting them as boundaries to their respective portions of land, when the division took place. Besides the assignment of land, the Emperor constituted a royal tribunal at *Putlam* called *Muttrakúdam*, and appointed eighteen of the *Múkwas* members of the same, under the authority of a *Disáve* or proconsul, who was to be annually sent from the court; and also conferred on the said eighteen members the title of *Wanniya*, with the following privileges, viz. "That the offices they held should be hereditary in their respective families; that they should not be capitally punished for any crime; that they should be exempted from the payment of tithes; and lastly, that their relations to a certain degree should be free from performing any personal labour to Government."



On referring to the *Sannases* inscribed on copper plates (of which there are but two extant), and comparing them with the accounts given of the lands having been allotted to the *Múkwas* by the same Emperor, and at the same time, there seems a great discrepancy, because of the two *Sannases* in question, one appears to have been given by TANI VELLA BAHU king of *Mádam-pa*, and the other by BUVENEKA BAHU Emperor of *Silá-xáka*, at two distinct periods. But they account for it by saying that these *Sannases* were granted to their chiefs in after times, to confirm the original donation of the land on the part of the former Emperor, who they say was MALALA TISSA RAJA, and who reigned between the years 753 and 779 of our era. However this may be, the *Múkwas* appear to have been in possession of the whole lands in the district during the government of the native Emperors, and for a considerable period maintained a sort of aristocratical government under their chiefs, till the district was conquered by the *Dutch*, who from political motives not only abridged their powers, but also monopolized several sources of their income.

The tenure by which the lands were held exhibited a strong resemblance to the feudal system of *Europe*, and according to the original institution, they were not in any way alienable; but in course of time, the *Indo Moors* (who settled in the district some time after the *Múkwas*) gaining an ascendancy over them by their pecuniary influence, gradually bought up all their lands for very trifling considerations, so that none remain at present in possession of their ancient property.



After the *Dutch* conquest the *Muttrakúdam* or tribunal at *Pullam* was abolished, and the *Land Raad* established in its place; of the aforementioned eighteen *Wanniyas*, six were dismissed as superfluous, and the remaining twelve appointed to officiate as members of the above court under the presidency of the chief Resident or *Oppelhoofdt* of *Calpentyn*, allowing them in lieu of pay exemption from tithes on their cultivation only. Since the Island has been a *British* colony, and the ancient form of government newly modelled, the *Land Raad* has been abolished, consequently the office and title of *Wanniya* has become extinct. The descendants of the *Wanniyas* are however not called upon to perform any menial labour at present, and a few of them are occasionally commissioned by the collector to assess the tithes in the district.

Having endeavoured to give an account of the origin and history of the *Múkwás* in the preceding pages, I shall now proceed to exhibit a brief description of their distinctions, manners, and customs.

The *Múkwás* are divided into seven distinct tribes, each denominated after the name of its founder, or the particular occupation professed by him. They are as follows:

*Pichánda vagei*

*Nállánda vagei*

*Pála vagei*

*Koyta vagei*



*Kálanga vagei*

*Mudivilangu Pándiya Téver*

*Vilangona vagei*

The *Múkwás* bear a close resemblance to the *Tamuls* both in their physiognomy, manner, and gait. The dress of the men consists of a cloth wrapped round the waist, a shawl thrown loosely across the shoulder, and on the head they wear a turband; but like the *Sinhalese* they never perforate their ears. The women have their ears bored, and decorated with gold earrings of various kinds, and their dress does not in the least differ from that of the *Moors*.

The *Múkwás*, both Christians and Mahomedans, are placed under the orders of a headman styled *Vidane Odyar*, holding a commission under the hand and seal of the Commissioner of Revenue, and through him the people are called upon to perform service to Government when required.

With regard to the ceremonies of marriage among the *Múkwás*; those who are Christians follow the rules of their church, and the Mahomedans abide by the ordinances contained in the *Koran*; but both sects observe the custom of having the *Táli* or gold string, tied round the neck of the bride by the bridegroom, to confirm the union: on which occasion they generally decorate their houses with white cloth and display many honorary distinctions. Besides this ceremony observed also by the *Tamuls*, the *Múkwás* observe the *Feast of purification*, on the seventh day after a girl is become marriageable, by inviting all their friends and relations to an

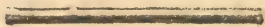


entertainment and decorating the house with white cloth &c. This ceremony is however losing ground among the Christian part of the *Mukwas*. In like manner when a boy attains a certain age, the ceremony of tying the *Talachila* or head cloth round his head for the first time is performed. It is done in an auspicious hour, under the roof of a *Pandal* erected for the purpose, either in connection with the dwelling house or detached from it, and decorated with white cloth. The people are invited by presenting them with a number of trays of *betel*, calculated according to their rank, and when they are assembled, the young man on whom the ceremony is to be performed, is seated on a covered stool, and the barber first asking permission of the assembly, shaves his beard rubbing it with milk. When he is shaved he is conducted to a well under a canopy, and cloth is spread before him to walk upon; he washes his body, returns to the *Pandal*, and places himself on his seat. The *Talachila* is then set on a salver, and handed round to each of the guests to touch, after which, the chief of the caste takes it up and ties it round the head of the youth. On this occasion the guests severally make a present of money to the parents, and return to their houses.

The *Mukwas* differ from all other castes in Ceylon with regard to the right of succession and inheritance, in the following particulars, when a *Mukwa* dies, his sons and daughters inherit equally the property acquired by him during his life time; but the property which he had received from his ancestors, called *Mudusum*, devolves to the sons of his sister, or in failure of heirs in

that branch, to the sons of his mothers sister's daughter, and so on to the fourth degree; but in failure of heirs in all these degrees, it then goes to his own children \*

Among the *Mukwas* the prejudice of cast is more rigidly attended to than among any other tribe, the least infringement of a rule subjects the offender to *ipsi facto* excommunication from the community and deprivation of the services of the barber and washermen; consequently they are very circumspect in their conduct.



\* This singular custom being found to correspond with that which prevails among the *Nairs* of *Malabar*, I have been induced to advance the opinion that the *Mukwas* are remotely allied to that race.



## APPENDIX.

### No. 1.

A Royal Grant of Land engraved on a Copper plate;  
literally translated from the *Sinhalese*.

#### PROSPERITY!

In the year of *Saka* 1467, (1) on Wednesday the fifth day of the Moon, in the month of *Esala*. (2) This day *Rāja Wanniyá* (3) having presented at the Royal Palace of *Mádampa* (4) thirty pairs of Elephant tusks, the fees of *Návakkádu*, (5) *Sitravela*, (6) and *Puttalama*, (7) were granted to him; together with this side of the mountain *Kudiremalé*, (8) this side of *Uuluváhu Kúbaka*, (9) situated at (the river) *Kala Oya*, (10) this side of *Díwörungala*, (11) and this side of the rock of *Paramakanda*, (12) inclusive. Also a signet ring, a jacket with frills round the collar, and a silver sword, were bestowed on him as *samakattu*. (13)

As these villages have been marked by breaking off the branches of trees, (14) they are granted as an unalienable possession.

If there be any who should violate this matter, they will be born as crows and dogs. (15)

This resplendent Edict is granted to *Rāja Wanniya* in perpetuity, as long as *Etugalla* and *Andágala*, (16) the sun and moon, endure.

This resplendent Edict was granted in the time of king *Tani Valla Báhu*, (17) of *Mádampa*.

## NOTES.

(1) Though the *Sinhalese* employ the year of *Buddha* to compute time in religious affairs from the era of *Buddha*, yet, in common with the *Hindus* and *Tamuls*, they generally make use of the era of *Saka* in all their public as well as private transactions; and the *Sinhalese* literati, whom I have consulted on the subject, coincide with me in deducing the latter from the reign of *Sālivāhana*, well known to Orientalists as the successor of *Vikramāditya* in the empire of Hindostan. It may not be amiss to observe here, that Captain MAHONY's account of the *Saka* era having had its origin in the circumstance of a famine breaking out in *Ceylon*, in the time of the Emperor *Kuda Wallah Gamba Raja* (vide *Asiatic Researches*, VOL. VII. p. 52,) is totally destitute of foundation; and in my opinion he must have been led into this error by relying on the report of others, though he professes himself to be perfectly acquainted with the histories contained in the *Rājavalī*, and has given an English version of some of its numerous chapters, The present year of *Saka* being 1753, that which is specified in the *Grant* corresponds with 1545 of *Christ*.

(2) *Esala* answers to part of July and August, and it corresponds with the *Tamul* month *Adi*.

(3) *Raja Wanniya* was one of the members of the late *Mutra-kūdam* at *Pullam*, and is also said to have exercised the office of *Disave*, or proconsul, over certain parts of *Demala Pattu*, which are now collectively called after his name *Rājawanni Pattu*, and over which one of his descendants, who retains possession of the *Grant*, still presides, but with very limited powers.

(4) *Mādampa*, properly *Mahādampa*, i. e. "the great city," is situated at no great distance to the south-east of *Chilaw*, and is chiefly inhabited by the *Sinhalese*. VALENTYN writes the name of this place *Candupitti Madampa*, as quoted by PHILALETES in his *History of Ceylon*, p. 43. The site of the ancient city is marked out by the base of the King's Palace and other public edifices found in the neighbourhood of the present village, in the jungle called *Māligākele*.

(5) *Nāvakadu*, in *Tamul* signifies "the forest of Jambu trees," but the *Sinhalese* derive it the origin from the word *Nevakeduva*, implying, "the place of Shipwreck;" some, however, treat both these



etymologies as fanciful, and labour to trace it from the word *Narakadu* or “*Nine swords*,” alleging that in primitive times the kings of *Kandy* were wont to visit this village soon after their coronation, and to assume the sword of state after performing ablution in the sea, and that no less than nine kings had thus come and assumed their sword at the place. It is situated on the peninsula of *Calpentyn*, opposite to *Putlam*, and is remarkable for the good water springs with which it abounds.

(6) *Sitravila*, a small little village in the neighbourhood of *Putlam*.

(7) *Puttalama* or *Putlam*, a word compounded of *pudu* new, and *alam* salt pans, which were, and still are, one of the principal sources of its revenue. Its original appellation is said to be *Kaliyánatorremugam*, (in *Sinhalese*, *Magullotamune*) or “the port of marriage,” bestowed on it from its having been the place where *VIJAYA RAJA*, the first king of *Ceylon*, was wedded to the princess *KUVENI* who resided in the neighbourhood, in the town called *Tammanná Nuvara*, at present a jungle called *Tammana Vilu*. *KNOX* writes the name of this village *Portaloon*, and briefly describes it in the following terms: “There is a part in the country of *Portaloon*, lying on the west side of this island, whence part of the king’s country is supplied with salt and fish; where they have some small trade with the *Dutch*, who have a fort upon the point to prevent boats from coming.”

(8) *Kudiremale*, a small hill standing on the margin of the bay of *Púkolam*, the northern limit of the district of *Putlam*, distinguishing it from that of *Mannar*. It is very probable that the *Hipporas* of Greek writers was no other than the bay near *Kudiremale*, as the word clearly imports; vide *Indiophilus*’s, letter published in the *Madras Government Gazette* of the 16th, September 1830.

(9) *Uluváhu Kubuka*, a small village in the country of *Nuvarakálava*, which has received the curious name of *Uluváhu*, or door frame, from two *Kubuka* trees standing at the place near to each other, and by their crooked growth approximating to a door frame in shape.

(10) *Kála Oya*, this river has its source from the breach of a very large tank in *Nuvarakálava*, and after a long winding through that province, disembogues into the gulph of *Calpentyn*.

(11) *Divurungala*, a rock in the *Demala Pattu* which serves as a

boundary between that province and *Magul Korle*. Its name is formed of two *Sinhalese* words signifying "the rock of conjurement;" and the native accounts state that it was called so from the chieftains of both provinces having met there and bound themselves by a solemn oath never to make any encroachment on each others territory.

(12) *Paramakanda*, a small hill in the *Demala Pattu* noted for a *Vihāra* which stands beneath it.

(13) *Samakhattu*, a term applied by the *Sinhalese* to any thing bestowed by the king on his subjects, and is synonymous with the *Hindu* word *Kelaut*.

(14) In the early period of the colonization of the island, there was a custom observed among the settlers, that when any one of them had a wish for a tract of land and had broken off the branches of trees and planted them on the four limits of it to signify the same, the others scrupulously avoided all interference with the land so marked; and the planter of the branches and his posterity were left in quiet possession of the land by a tenure hence denominated *Atuhan-praveni*, from *atta* a branch, *hana* mark, and *praven* possession.

(15) This is the penalty usually added in all the *Sinhalese* Grants for violating them, and ridiculous as it may appear to us, it had generally the desired effect of insuring to the grantee the quiet possession of the land assigned him.

It appears that the *Hebrews* held the dog in detestation, as we learn in the Scriptures; but the *Sinhalese* reckon both dogs and crows equally vile, probably from their considering the latter as the *vahan* or vehicle of *sani*, the source of all misfortune. According to *VIRGIL* as quoted by *CHAMBERS* in his *Cyclopedia*, the *Romans* regarded it a bad omen when the crow was seen on the left, and I have seen a treatise in *Tamul*, containing rules for auguring from the croaking of that bird.

(16) *Elugalla*, and *Andāgala* are two large rocks in the seven *Korles*, generally alluded to by the *Sinhalese* in their public acts as symbols of eternity.

(17) *Tani Palla Bāhu*. This prince was the younger brother of *Dharma Palla Bahu*, Emperor of Cotta, from whom it seems he had the small kingdom of *Madampa* assigned to him.



## APPENDIX.

### No. 2.

A Royal Grant of Land engraved on a copper plate ;  
literally translated from the *Sinhalese*.

#### PROSPERITY !

In the year of *Saka* 1469, ( 1 ) on a Wednesday in the month of *Nikini*, ( 2 ) the seven *Vilas* ( 3 ) of *Pomparippu*, ( 4 ) and ( the villages ) *Lunāvila*, *Sēnaikudiyyirippu*, *Mahānabandavīla*, and *Milapotāna*, with the dry and irrigated lands inclusive, were granted to *Nara Ratna Wanniya* of *Lunāvila*, during the time of the emperor of *Silāvaka*. ( 5 ) These lands were bestowed on him because he presented two white Umbrellas, one Lance, one Sword, one Jacket with frills round the collar, one Signet ring, two pair of Elephant tusks, and two pieces of cloth embroidered with gold. As long as the *Etugala* and *Andégala*, the sun and moon endure ; if any one should violate this matter, he will be born as a crow and as a dog.

This resplendent Edict was granted to *Nara Ratna Wanniya* in perpetuity.

## NOTES.

(1) A. D. 1547

(2) *Nikini*, answers to part of August and September, and corresponds with the *Tamul* month *Avani*.

(3) *Vilas*, are a kind of bogs, but susceptible of cultivation. The seven *vilas* specified in the Grant are called as follows: *Mailvila*, *Peruvila*, *Kaluvila*, *Maravila*, *Tevivila*, *Kolinchivila*, *Attavila*, and *Taleivila*.

(4) *Pomparippu* or *Pomparippo*, would be more correctly written *Ponparappi*, meaning in *Tamul*, "the golden plains;" and this significant appellative was bestowed on the province probably in allusion to its rich soil. Though it is now almost a waste yet the numerous remains of brick buildings, apparently of *Hindu* architecture, found in various quarters, proved it to have been in ancient periods the proud abode of princes and nobles of that nation.

(5) *Silāvaka* (called by the *Tamuls* with very little variation *Silavaké*) is situate about 30 miles E. of *Colombo*, and according to a tradition in general reception among the *Sinhalese*, owes its name to *Sita*, who is said to have been held in confinement at the place by *Ravana*, the ancient giant king of *Ceylon*. It is remarkable in *Sinhalese* history for having continued during a long period the sumptuous residence of their Emperors.

It is very singular that the name of the Emperor who was the donor of the lands is not inserted in the Grant; but, however, by comparing the date with the chronological list of the sovereigns of *Ceylon* in *PHILÆTHE*'s work, I see that the Emperor who reigned at the time was called by the title of *Buvaneka Bahu Mahā Raja*.



*To the Editor of the Madras Government Gazette.*

SIR,

In Pliny's notices of Ceylon, as quoted by Philaethes, mention is made of "one *Annius Plocanus*, a freedman, who farmed the customs in the Red Sea, having been blown in a violent tempest off the coast of Arabia, was unexpectedly driven after a passage of fifteen days to the port of *Hippúros*, in the island of Taprobane," but the situation of that port is difficult to be traced. The word *Hippuros* or *Hipporus* is probably composed of the Greek words *hippos* a horse and *Oros* a mountain, which appears to be a translation of the Tamul word *Kudire-malé*, the name of a hill in the vicinity of the bay called *Pukolam*, on the N. W. coast of Ceylon, near the pearl banks of Condatchy.

In the neighbourhood of *Kudire-malé*, inland, there are numerous architectural remains, as pillars, tumuli, &c, which seem to corroborate a native tradition that at a very ancient period it was the site of an extensive city, the residence of a Hindu Princess named *Alli* or *Alli Arasáni*, whose marriage with *Arjuna* one of the *Pándavas*, is the subject of a popular Tamul drama, entitled *Alliyarasáninátaka*.

My object in troubling you with these unimportant remarks is to invite attention to this curious subject, and should you think them worthy of insertion in your Gazette you will gratify,

Yours very sincerely,

INDIOPHILUS.

*Calpentyne,*

19th. August, 1830.





AN ESSAY  
ON THE  
CEREMONIES  
OBSERVED  
BY THE  
TAMUL CASTES.

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BY SIMON CASIE CHITTY,

MANIAGAR OF PUTLAM.  
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COLOMBO:

PRINTED AT THE WESLEYAN MISSION PRESS.

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1831.

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## AN ESSAY.

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Having in a former Essay given a correct classification of the various castes which constitute the *Tamul* nation, my present object is, to delineate the different ceremonies observed amongst them. My information on the subject being chiefly derived from personal observation, made in the district of *Pullam* and *Calpentyn*, I cannot presume to assert that the ceremonies, of which a description is here attempted, are universally practiced throughout the island, or on the continent of *India*; for, although they may coincide in the principal or leading rites, the subordinate parts commonly vary according to persons and places.

The celebration both of marriage and funeral ceremonies is considered by the *Tamuls* as a matter of great importance, and they generally lavish considerable sums of money in distinguishing such occasions. Besides these two particular rites, they have several lesser ones which are observed with equal minuteness, and ostentatious display. I shall first endeavour to particularize the rites of marriage as observed by them, and then proceed with the rest in due order.

Marriage, in classical *Tamul*, is called "*Viváham*," from the sanskrit "*Viváha*," but this term is used only among the higher orders, the word in more general use is "*kaliyánam*," implying "*conviviality*." Proposals of marriage are usually made by the parents of the parties wishing to be united; when these are assented to, they first ascertain from a *Brahmin* the day which will be most propitious for its consummation, according to the rules of astrology, by which their actions are invariably regulated in matters of moment; hence, as it regards the ceremony of marriage, the month *Adi*, which answers to part of our July and August, is considered a very inauspicious period, and consequently no marriages are ever celebrated during that time.

The fathers of both parties being assured of an auspicious hour invite their friends and relations, and commence erecting a *pandal* or booth in front of their respective dwellings. In raising these *pandals* disputes often arise touching the number of *káls*, or poles required to support the horizontal roof, as none but those of distinguished rank are entitled to twenty one. The erection of the first pole on the north east side is accompanied by many superstitious observances; before it is fixed in the ground it is besmeared with pulverized sanders and turmeric and the top ornamented with a number of *Mango* leaves and pieces of silk; and when about to be put into the hole destined to receive it they throw in small bits of gold, coral, and pearls, together with a *chank*,\* and some cocoanut milk.

\* The *chank* or *conch* shell, having nine valves or foldings is considered by the votaries of *vishnu* as representing his nine *avatars* or incarnations, and on that account is perforated and used by them as a trumpet at their religious performances.



When the *pandal* is complete, they proceed to the *Mudeliar*, the headman of the district, with nine trays of *betel* leaves and *areka* nuts, arranged one upon the other, and decently covered with a white cloth, and presenting them to him, obtain his permission in writing for their washerman to hang the *pandals* with white cloth, both inside and out, or inside only as the rank and condition of the parties allow. Having thus obtained the sanction of the *Mudeliar* they dispatch a party of their friends into the country to announce the intended marriage to the people, by presenting them also with divers trays of *betel* leaves, calculated according to their rank and caste: while this is in progress, the *pandal* is hung with white cloth, and adorned with the cocoanut blossoms and young leaves, &c.

But besides the *pandal* just described, they erect triumphal arches near their dwellings, adorning them with the leaves of the cocoanut tree; and fix two rows of the stems of plantain trees with lamps on their tops forming a street from the door of their habitation to the *pandal*, which rude display has far from an unpleasant effect even on the more refined taste of a European. In the centre of the *pandal*, erected at the dwelling of the bride, an extra pole is fixed, called *Arasánikál*, or the lady pole; and near it is raised a small altar of earth, on which is placed a ball of cow dung ornamented with *kusa* \* grass, to represent *Pulliyar*, the deity who is supposed to preside over these rites, as *Janus* was among the *Romans*. In front of the *Arasánikál* a quadrangular pit is dug,

\* *Pea cynosuroides*. Koen.

and the inside of it besmeared with cow dung for the purpose of kindling the *Hómam*, or sacrificial fire; on the edge of the pit is fixed a serpent formed of clay in an erect posture; and before it are placed three painted pots, piled one upon the other, having on the top a cocoanut streaked with turmeric, and a lamp burning near them. When every necessary preparation is completed the bride's father intimates it to the bridegroom, who proceeds to her dwelling with the *Táli* or wedding ring, and the *kúré* or apparel, which are borne before him by a servant maid, either in a box or on a salver attended by his friends and relations.

If the bridegroom be a person of superior rank, or descended from a headman of distinction, the washermen spread white cloth along the road for him to walk upon; two others fan him with *chamarams*,\* while four persons hold a canopy over his head; the musicians following with their music, two barbers blowing *chanks*, dancing girls moving in measure, and a number of boys carrying lighted flambeaus, white umbrellas and flags, and others exhibiting fireworks, forming altogether a most medley but still imposing group.

As soon as the bridegroom is seen approaching, the bride's father goes out with a select party of friends to welcome him, sprinkling rosewater on him; and when he arrives the bride (who has previously been bathed and adorned in splendid apparel, and richly ornamented with jewels) is ushered into the *pandal*, and they both take their

\* The *chamara* or *chowri*, is a whisk made of the tail of the *bos grunniens*.



seats on cushions placed near the *Arasánikál*, keeping their faces directed towards the east, by which they intend some compliment to the glorious orb of day. When the bride and bridegroom are thus seated, the guests also take their respective places, and the *Brahmin* ignites the sacrificial fire, occasionally throwing into it handfuls of each sort of fine grain, and a number of dried sprigs of the trees *A'l*, \* *Arasu*, † *Itti*, †† *Atti*, ‖ *Má*, § *Karunkáli*, †† together with the *kusa* grass and *Náyuruxi* ‖ herb, also pouring into it drops of clarified butter one hundred and eight times, at different intervals, reciting each time a text from the *véda*, and a series of short orisons; the intention of which is, to invoke the deities to accept of the sacrifice thus offered, and to endow the couple about to be married with happiness and prosperity. The *tálí* is afterwards placed on a salver and handed round to the guests, to be touched separately and successively by each of them, and when that is done it is placed before the bridegroom who hangs it round the neck of the bride, during which act the *Brahmin* divides the cocoanut, which lay on the painted pot, into two equal parts, and pronounces a benediction, while the barber sounds the *chank*, and the musicians play on their instruments without intermission.

When the above ceremony is ended, the rite called *Pánigraham* is performed by the *Brahmin*, which is that of joining the hands of the two, painting a *pottu* or full moon on their foreheads with pulverized sander

\* *Ficus benghalensis*. † *Ficus religiosa*. †† A variety of the sacred fig. ‖ *Ficus udumbara*. § *Mangifera indica*, †† *Diospyros ebenum*, Karalsabo.

wood and the sacrificial ashes, and making them circumambulate the fire three times, occasionally throwing into it handfuls of *paddy* mixed with flowers, &c, as they pass; during this latter observance their hands are clasped together in an adoring attitude towards the element. These circumvolutions having ceased, the *Brahmin* recites the subjoined sentence, "*The sun and moon, this fire, and the thirty three millions of gods, are witness, that——, the son of——, now gives his daughter ——, as wife to——, who is the son of——.*" In this stage of the proceedings the bride's father formally gives his daughter to her husband and repeats with the *Brahmin* the above declaration, which concludes the ceremony.

When a marriage has been thus solemnized, the bride stands on a stone with the point of her right foot, while the bridegroom points out to her through an aperture made in the roof the pandal, the constellation *Arun-dhati*, as an emblem of matrimonial virtue. The last named ceremony is sometimes performed on the fourth day after marriage, but it is contrary to the rules laid down in their ritual laws. When the newly married pair are about to withdraw, the parents and relations besprinkle them with turmeric water impregnated with *kusa* grass, the intention of which is to protect them from all kind of witchcraft, but more particularly from the fascination of the eyes. The relations and friends then pronounce a blessing on the two, wishing them a numerous progeny, in the following words: "*you shall flourish*



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"like the *Banian tree*, and take your root like the *Kusa*  
"grass, you shall shoot up like the *Bamboo* and live without  
"end." \*

After this they are conducted into the marriage chamber and the assembly breaks up, not however without partaking of an entertainment, or masticating *Betel*, and besmearing their breasts with pulverized sander wood. On the fourth day after the consummation of the marriage, a whimsical ceremony called *Nalan chadankoe* is invariably observed; the newly married couple are led in procession to a well, where the husband stands with one end of the wife's cloth about his loins and she with the other; they then pour water on both their heads, after sprinkling them profusely with the juice of turmeric. This is however scarcely worthy of notice and I have remarked it only because it has never been mentioned by any European writer.

The marriage ceremonies already described, chiefly relate to the heathen *Chetties* and *velaler*, for the christian portion of those castes never observe any part of them, except the hanging of the *táli* round the bride's neck, which they also consider essential to the union, similar to the custom of presenting a ring to the bride in the solemnization of matrimony among Europeans.

The *kammáler* or tribe of artificers, very nearly follow the *chetties* and *velaler* in their ceremonies, but the *karreas* or fishers differ very materially; for they

\* How nearly does this benediction agree with the subjoined, Psalm cxxviii, forming part of the marriage service of the Church of England.  
"Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine, upon the walls of thine house; thy  
"children like the Olive branches, round about thy table."

observe three different forms of marriage, in which they are not scrupulous; and as I only design to mark the existing differences, I hope to be pardoned the narration of what is evidently the result of lax morals.

The first called *Máleimanam*, is performed by the bridegroom's sister simply hanging the *táli* round the neck of the intended bride, after decking her person with wreaths of certain flowers and anointing her with some odours. When thus married, if either party disagree or do not wish to live together, they may part, after the payment of a fine of 25 Rds. to the Temple, by the party who desires a separation.

The second is called *Siru' táli*, which is nothing more than hanging the *táli* as aforesaid, without any ceremonies whatever; and in this case the party desiring to be divorced is obliged to pay a fine of 12 Rds. and 6 Fs. to the Temple.

The third is called *Manjepúsel*, viz, contracting the marriage without even hanging the *táli*; the bridegroom's sister merely besmearing the bride's garment with pulverized turmeric; and in this case the party who wishes to be divorced is only obliged to pay a fine of 6 Rds. 3 Fs. to the Temple.

The *Paravas*, who are all christians, differ so little in their ceremonies from the other castes as to claim no particular notice, with the exception of a very remarkable custom which they observe at their wedding suppers. It is, that if a person of inferior rank, or who may have lost the privileges of his caste by infringing their rules,



should happen to join the assembly, and when the others sit down to the meal, he presume to take a seat, the barber who is in attendance, without saying a word to him or any other person, immediately puts out all the lights, and turns out the daring intruder without allowing any of the persons assembled to recognize him who has been thus dismissed from their society.

Before I close my discription of the various marriage ceremonies, and proceed to notice others, I must observe that among the heathens the emblem on the circular piece of gold, appended to the string of the *tali*, represents the proboscis and pendant belly of *Pullyar* or *ganésa*; but that exhibited by the christians, with very few exceptions, represents a dove, implying the descent of the deity in that form on the occasion of our Saviour's baptism in the river *Jordan*.

There is a very particular custom observed among the *Tamuls* respecting the male sex, who are not allowed to shave their beards, from the time they first appear until the ceremony of what is termed "*urumalkattu* or *talachila kattu*," i. e. "*binding the head cloth*," has been performed; and as there is some expence attending it many are constrained to retain their beards, until their circumstances will admit of the expence necessarily incurred; for to be deprived of the ceremony is considered the greatest disgrace that could befall a man. When therefore a day has been appointed for the performance of this custom, the parents of the person to be shaved, erect a large *pandal* before their house, and after obtaining the per-

mission of the *Mudeliar* (as in cases of marriage) have it lined with white cloth, and tastefully ornamented with green leaves and flowers: this done they send some person to invite the inhabitants of their neighbourhood, by presenting them with *Betel*; and on arriving at the *pandal* they seat themselves in particular order as already designed for them. The youth during this period remaining in his ordinary attire, is now brought to the *pandal* and seated in the midst of the assembly, having a cup of milk placed before him. The barber who is to operate, then makes a low bow \* to the assembly, and clasping his hands to his breast in a humble manner, demands of the chief who presides on the occasion, if he may be permitted to perform his office: upon his signifying an assent, he takes some milk from the cup, and anointing the beard with it, slowly performs the operation. During the time that the barber is thus employed, every one of the guests throws a piece of money into the cup, which is the barbers exclusive perquisite.

The shaving operation being concluded the whole assembly rise, and conduct the young man in procession to a well, carrying a canopy of white cloth over his person, and spreading cloth for him to walk upon all the way, while the tom tom beaters fill the air with their discordant music. The newly shaved person then bathes his person, and arrays himself in garments which are now splendid; he is then conducted back to the *pandal*,

\* Abbe Dubois remarks "that this sign of reverence is not confined to the Hindu, but is common to several other nations of Asia; which is confirmed "by the most ancient of all books, the Bible, where this extraordinary mark "of reverence is called by the name of *adoration*, even when it is applied "to mere mortals," Description of India, p. 28.



in the same manner as when he left it; and on retaking his seat, the *Talachila*, or head cloth, is placed on a salver, and handed round that each of the guests may touch it; after which the chief takes it up, and pronouncing a blessing, winds it round the head of the youth, who rises and returns thanks to the assembly saluting them with a low bow. The whole party then sit down to an entertainment, at the conclusion of which they severally make a small present to the young man; as for instance a shawl, or some thing equally trifling.

In like manner the *Tamuls* celebrate the period when their daughters become marriageable. The girl is confined for seven days and not allowed to be seen. She is then bathed, on which occasion an entertainment is given, consisting chiefly of rice, cakes streaked with turmeric to mark the event; and this takes place under a *pandal* lined with white cloth. While the girl is bathing, the women in attendance perform many whimsical ceremonies, the intention of which is to protect her from enchantment, and they subsequently sprinkle each other with turmeric water.

The christian *Tamuls* do not observe any of these mystical ceremonies; or if they do, they are at much pains to conceal it from their priests, who though not armed with inquisitorial power, have their methods of punishment, either by loading them with large crosses, or by placing crowns of thorns on their heads during the celebration of mass in their chapels.

The *Tamuls* also have a particular ceremony for the purification of women after childbirth, which is performed by a *Brahmin*; and which, though it has no relation to the churching of women among christians, yet still bears some resemblance to the ancient practice of purification among the Jews.

There may also be traced another trait in the *Tamul* character, as bearing some resemblance to the *Jews*, when they censured our Saviour for eating with Publicans and sinners: it is, that none of high distinction will sit and eat with those of low extraction, unless they previously purchase a title to do so—which is performed by the following ceremony;—

The Individual desiring to be equalized with a higher class, must first signify his wishes to the chiefs and leaders of his caste, and upon their assurance that no impediment will be made thereto, he raises a *pandal*, and decorates it with white cloth. He then personally waits upon every one whom he considers necessary to be present at his feast, and invites them severally to his *pandal*, where he first undergoes the ceremony of shaving, and tying the head cloth, and where a sumptuous entertainment then awaits them, at which he himself presides. In some instances the individual is obliged to pay a sum of money to the Temple, and also to make suitable presents to his respective guests, but this is not always the case. When a man has been thus publicly equalized there can be no objection to his associating with any person of his caste.



It must be observed, however, that this practice is confined chiefly to the inferior classes, as instances of this nature are very rare among the others.

Having endeavoured in the preceding pages to describe certain festivities attendant on joyous occasions, I shall now attempt to represent those ceremonies observed on mournful ones; that as they are the last rites which a man has to perform to his fellow creature, so it may be the concluding paragraph in this Essay,

As soon as it is ascertained that life is extinct, the relations of the deceased person erect a *pandal* before the house upon four poles, and the washerman hangs it with white cloth; the barber blows a *chank* to announce the event to the village; the friends and neighbours are then invited by verbal messages to the funeral *pandal*. When the people are assembled, they bring out the corpse, and pour three jars of water over it, rubbing on the head some *gingely*\* oil and expressed *ilippe*† seeds. After the act of ablution is thus performed the body is habited in a clean garment, and decked with wreaths of fragrant flowers, and the nearest relation of the deceased, placing a pice of muslin over the mouth of the corpse, they each cast on it, according to seniority, a few grains of rice, and a *challi*, which is the perquisite of the barber who attends at the funeral. The corpse is then placed in the centre of the *pandal*, raised on an elevation, when the wife or son of the deceased performs the last peculiar rite of "breaking the jar," which is, that one of the beforenamed relatives

\* *Sesamum indica*.

† *Bassia longifolia*,

brings from the house a jar of water, carrying it on the shoulder, and bearing a lighted wick in one hand : making a circuit three times round the body, the jar is broken by suffering it gently to fall down, and the lighted wick is extinguished at the same moment. This ceremony is sometimes performed at the place of burning, but most frequently in the house, particularly if the person be a female, who according to the rules of decorum, as observed by them, could not be allowed to accompany the corpse to the place assigned for its last destination. After the jar is broken, the corpse is laid on a bier made with cocoanut branches, decorated with flowers, and carried to the jungle, upon mens shoulders, under a canopy of white cloth, attended by a number of persons, the barber in particular, who sounds the chank all the way. When the procession reaches the appointed place, a clean spot is selected, where, piling up a number of billets of dried wood, they lay the corpse on the top, and pouring a jar of clarified butter on it, set fire to the pile, which soon reduces the whole to ashes. The same ceremonies are observed at burials; for the rite of cremation is denied to a woman who dies in childbed, as well as to children under the age of puberty. After attending the last rites of cremation or sepulture, each person must wash his body, and purify himself before entering a house, or partaking of any food; and in the observance of this particular they very much resemble the Jews, among whom, "when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent" are considered "unclean seven days".



The second day after the burning, the son, and other near relations of the deceased, proceed to the spot for the purpose of making oblations of different kinds of roasted grain, dressed on the spot, and of dividing a cocoanut into equal parts, which is termed "*kadettukiratu*". This being concluded, they gather up the ashes of the funeral pile, and putting them into a copper vessel, place it on the head of the nearest akin they depart in solemn procession to some Tank, or lake, and throw them into it.

At the expiration of forty days, or whenever it suits the convenience of the party, it is incumbent on the same relative to apply to the Brahmin, and have the obsequies called *karmandiram* performed to his manes. It is as follows; a *pandal* is erected in a solitary garden upon four poles, decorated with white cloth, green boughs, and flowers; under this *pandal* the Brahmin selects a level space, besmearing it with cow-dung, and forming squares on it similar to a chess table, with various coloured powders. Nine copper vessels called *chemboo*, piled up one over the other and wound round with silk, are placed near these squares, and a cocoanut streaked with turmeric, is laid on the top of the upper vessel. After the vessels are thus arranged, the Brahmin makes an effigy with the *cusa* grass and places it on a bier of the same material: all of which being concluded, the relations bring out from the house of the deceased a triangular piece of brick, which has been consecrated to the deceased in the night preceding, under a canopy of white cloth, accompanied by music of all sorts, chanks, tom toms &c, and place that also near the squares. A wooden mortar and pestle is

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next put at the entrance of the *pandal*, which some one of the relations beat at intervals during the whole period of this external form of their religion. The son, or any one else upon whom the conducting of this ceremony has devolved, has a string put across his shoulders, and wears a ring of *cusa* grass on the little finger of his right hand, neither of which he can remove until every thing is concluded; as they are considered symbols of his having bound himself by oath to conduct them. When all these preliminaries are adjusted, the Brahmin kindles the sacrificial fire, in a manner similar to that which is practised on occasions of marriage, and after making oblations of rice, mixed with milk, curds and butter, the effigy is burnt, and the ashes carefully gathered up and thrown into a tank. They then return to the *pandal*, and forming a procession, convey the piece of brick already mentioned to a river, or any running water, and there throw it in—after which they immerse themselves in the same water, once or twice, and return to their respective dwellings in their wet condition.



